

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.(currently amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I):



wherein A is a C₂-C₆ alkylene chain, comprising [[the]] nitration of a compound of formula (II):



wherein A is as defined above, ~~with "stabilised" nitric acid~~ with nitric acid having a concentration ranging from 83 to 85%, and a concentration of nitrous acid and nitrogen oxides lower than 10 p.p.m., in a weight ratio of from 10:1 to 15:1 by weight with respect to compound (II), for a time ranging from 10 to 30 minutes.

2.(currently amended) ~~[[A]] The process as claimed in~~ according to claim 1, wherein the compound of formula (I) is ethanediol-mononitrate; 1,3-propanediol-mononitrate; 1,4-butanediol-mononitrate; 1,5-pentanediol-mononitrate or 1,6-hexanediol-mononitrate.

3. (currently amended) [[A]] The process according to claim 1, wherein the "stabilised" nitric acid has a concentration ranging from 83 to 85% and is substantially free from nitrous acid and nitrogen oxides 84.5 to 84.8%, and the concentration of nitrous oxide and nitrogen oxides is lower than 5 p.p.m.

4. (currently amended) [[A]] The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out in a water-immiscible chlorinated organic solvent.

5. (currently amended) [[A]] The process as claimed in according to claim 4, wherein the chlorinated organic solvent is a mono-, di-, tri- or tetra-chloro C₁-C₄-alkyl hydrocarbon.

6-7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) [[A]] The process according to claim 1, wherein the compound of formula (II) is 1,4-butanediol and the weight ratio of "stabilised" nitric acid to butanediol ranges from 11:1 to 14.5:1.

9. (currently amended) The process according to claim 1, further comprising mixing the compound of formula (I)
~~Nitration mixture~~ in a water-immiscible organic chlorinated

~~solvent to form a nitration mixture comprising a compound of formula (I), as obtainable by the process of claim 1.~~

10-11. (canceled)

12. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the nitric acid has been treated with sulfamic acid or urea.

13. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the nitric acid has been treated with about 0.6 to about 1% w/w urea.

14. (New) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I):



wherein A is a C₂-C₆ alkylene chain,
comprising:

treating nitric acid with sulfamic acid or urea; and
nitrating a compound of formula (II):



wherein A is as defined above,
with the nitric acid having a concentration ranging from 83 to 85%, and a concentration of nitrous acid and nitrogen oxides lower than 10 p.p.m., in a weight ratio of from 10:1 to 15:1

by weight with respect to compound (II), for a time ranging from 10 to 30 minutes.

15. (New) The process according to claim 14, wherein the nitric acid has been treated with about 0.6 to about 1% w/w urea.

16. (new) A method for preparing a nitrating mixture, comprising:

preparing a compound of formula (I):



wherein A is a C₂-C₆ alkylene chain,

by nitrating a compound of formula (II):



wherein A is as defined above,

with nitric acid having a concentration ranging from 83 to 85%, and a concentration of nitrous acid and nitrogen oxides lower than 10 p.p.m., in a weight ratio of from 10:1 to 15:1 by weight with respect to compound (II), for a time ranging from 10 to 30 minutes; and

mixing the compound of formula (I) with a water-immiscible organic chlorinated solvent.

17. (New) The process according to claim 16, wherein the nitric acid has been treated with sulfamic acid or urea.

18. (New) The process according to claim 16, wherein the nitric acid has been treated with about 0.6 to about 1% w/w urea.